

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Idaho Falls District Road Maintenance

**PP&A No.:** 3834

**Project Manager:** Micah Bandurraga

**Location:** Cassia, Fremont, Teton, and Bonneville counties, Idaho and Teton County, Wyoming.

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to repair and construct approximately 1.8 miles of access roads within the Idaho Falls District along the following transmission lines: Minidoka - Powerhouse Unity, Targhee - Drummond, Cattle Creek - Goshen, and Swan Valley – Teton No.1 (see Table 1).

Access road work would include the construction of 1,973 linear feet of roadway, the improvement of 7,464 linear feet of existing roadway, and the decommissioning and reseeding of 411 linear feet of roadway. Proposed road work would include; blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and placing surface rock on new and existing road prisms to ensure safe access to structures. In addition, the work would include; the installation of five landing areas around existing transmission line structures (sizes of about 100 square feet), repair of two landings, installation of a turnaround, installation of a road approach, and installation of drainage features such as water bars and drain dips. General equipment used for this type of road maintenance includes: graders, rollers, bull-dozers, brush hogs, excavators, and dump trucks.

**Table 1. Access Road Work Locations**

| Structures                              | Township, Range, Section       | County, State  | Ownership           | USGS Quad Name   |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| <b>Targhee - Drummond No. 1 Line</b>    |                                |                |                     |                  |
| 21/11-22/1                              | 7N, 43E, Section 25            | Freemont, ID   | Private             | Drummond         |
| 22/2-22/9                               | 7N, 43E, Section 24            | Freemont, ID   | Private             | Drummond         |
| 23/1-24/1                               | 7N, 43E, Section 13            | Freemont, ID   | Private, BLM        | Drummond         |
| 24/2-24/10                              | 7N, 43E, Section 12            | Freemont, ID   | Private, BLM, State | Drummond         |
| 25/1-25/6                               | 7N, 43E, Sections 1, 2, 11, 12 | Freemont, ID   | Private, BLM        | Drummond         |
| <b>Cattle Creek - Goshen No. 1 Line</b> |                                |                |                     |                  |
| 8/5-9/8                                 | 1N, 39E, Section 33            | Bonneville, ID | Private             | Ammon, Ozone     |
| 10/1-10/5                               | 1N, 39E, Section 32            | Bonneville, ID | Private             | Ammon, Wolverine |
| <b>Swan Valley - Teton No. 1 Line</b>   |                                |                |                     |                  |
| 23/10                                   | 41N, 118W, Sections 5 & 8      | Teton, WY      | USFS                | Victor           |

| Structures                     | Township, Range, Section  | County, State | Ownership     | USGS Quad Name |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Minidoka PH - Unity No. 1 Line |                           |               |               |                |
| 16/6-16/8                      | 11S, 25E, Sections 6 & 7  | Cassia, ID    | BLM & Private | Albion         |
| 16/6-16/8                      | 11S, 24E, Sections 1 & 12 | Cassia, ID    | BLM & Private | Albion         |

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

*/s/ Laura Roberts*  
 Laura Roberts  
 Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*  
 Stacy L. Mason  
 NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *December 11, 2017*

Attachment(s):  
 Environmental Checklist

## Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

**Proposed Action:** Idaho Falls District Access Road Maintenance

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### Project Site Description

The proposed access road maintenance is located on rural public and private forest land, foothills, valley bottom, rangeland, and agricultural land. Additionally, the project area includes the following five habitat types: Montane Forest, Intermountain Grassland, Riparian, Scrub / Shrub Grassland, and Agricultural.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

| Environmental Resource Impacts  | No Potential for Significance       | No Potential for Significance, with Conditions |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA conducted cultural resource field surveys for the proposed project. No cultural resources were identified within the Areas of Potential Effect. BPA sent Letters of Determination that no historic properties would be affected by the project to the corresponding Idaho and Wyoming SHPO, and to The Shoshone – Bannock Tribes in early 2017. BPA received one response consisting of SHPO concurrence for the Swan Valley-Teton line on 22 April, 2017.</p> |                                     |  |
| 2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> About 0.64 acre of new ground would be disturbed for construction of new road and landings. Material and equipment staging areas would be located on existing roads, existing landings, and turnarounds. Equipment would be restricted to existing road prisms, road fills, and structure landings. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.</p>   |                                     |  |
| 3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special status plants present within the project area. Disturbed areas would be reseeded as necessary.</p>  |                                     |  |

4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: Grizzly bears and Canada lynx are found within the Northern Rockies Ecosystem. However, according to the Caribou-Targhee National Forest CTNF Wildlife Biologist Chris Kula, only grizzly bears are suspected to travel through the areas surrounding the Swan Valley-Teton No. 1 Line.

At this time, there have been no Canada lynx sightings, tracks, or scat observed within this portion of the CTNF. (Chris Kula, personal communication, June 27, 2016). Therefore, based on BPA analysis and consultation with the CTNF and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), all agencies agree that the proposed maintenance activities would have no effect to these species. A concurrence email dated June 28, 2017 from the CTNF concluded that the project area does not contain suitable habitat for grizzly bears or Canada lynx and therefore, would have no effect on the species. Other special status species and critical habitat was reviewed and was found not to be present within the project area.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: There is no proposed road maintenance involving a perennial water body or any type of water body that would affect any fish species.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands present within the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. Project would not result in any ground water withdrawals nor provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: No change in land use would occur.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality as a result of the proposed road maintenance.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emission due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise of transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

### **Evaluation of Other Integral Elements**

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and

health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA Realty will make appropriate landowner notifications.

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Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on any environmentally sensitive resources.

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts  
Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: December 11, 2017